

CLAIMS

1. A rental estimation method through which rental information with regard to rental devices is provided to a customer through a data exchange between a terminal of the  
5 customer and a management server of a rental company,  
comprising:

a data input step for entering work content data indicating a work content through the customer terminal; and  
a necessary device reporting step for reading out a list  
10 of a plurality of necessary devices matching the work content and rental information corresponding to the necessary devices from a predefined database and for providing them to the customer.

15 2. A rental estimation method according to claim 1,  
further comprising:

a device selection step for selecting a device to be rented from the list of the necessary devices provided through the necessary device reporting step.

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3. A rental estimation method according to claim 1 or claim 2, further comprising:

a device adding step for adding a device other than the necessary devices for rental.

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4. A rental estimation method according to claim 2,  
further comprising:

a device adding step for adding a device other than the  
necessary devices for rental;

5 a reservation step for making a rental reservation for  
renting the device selected in the device selection step and  
the device added in the device adding step; and

an accepting step for accepting the reservation made  
in the reservation step.

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5. A rental estimation system comprising:

a data input means through which data are entered by  
a rental customer;

15 a work content management database in which a list of  
necessary devices each corresponding to a work content is  
stored;

a stock management database in which rental  
information with regard to the necessary devices is stored;

20 a rental management server that reads out a plurality  
of necessary devices matching a work content and rental  
information with regard to the necessary devices from the  
work content management database and the stock management  
database in response to input of data of a work content through  
the data input means; and

a reporting means for providing the information read out by the rental management server to a customer.

6. A rental estimation system according to claim 5,  
5 wherein:

the data input means further allows an entry of data indicating a rental period; and

10 the rental estimation system further comprises a rental period adjustment means for adjusting a rental period entered and set through the data input means individually in correspondence to each of the necessary devices.

7. A rental estimation system according to claim 5 or  
claim 6, further comprising:

15 a device management database in which specification information relating to specifications of the necessary devices is stored, wherein:

as a predefined detailed information display command is entered through the data input means, the rental 20 management server reads out specification information corresponding to the necessary device from the device management database and provides the specification information to a customer.

8. A rental estimation system according to claim 7,  
wherein:

necessary devices used in a given application are  
grouped together and groups of necessary devices are stored  
5 in the device management database; and

the rental estimation system further comprises a  
device switching means for selectively switching the  
necessary device to a device in a matching group when a  
predefined input is made through the data input means.

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9. A rental estimation system according to claim 8,  
further comprising:

an adding means for setting an additional necessary  
device selected from the device management database in  
15 response to a predefined device add command inputted through  
the data input means.

10. A rental information acquisition terminal comprising:

an input means for entering a work content as prompted  
20 in a screen brought up on display;  
a recognition means for recognizing the work content  
entered via the screen brought up on display;  
a transmission means for transmitting the recognized  
work content to a server;

a reception means for receiving information indicating a plurality of types of devices matching the work content and rental information related to the devices, which are searched at the server based upon the work content; and

5       a display means for displaying a screen in which the work content are entered and for bringing up a display of the information indicating the plurality of types of devices and their rental information having been received.

10     11. A rental information acquisition program product for exchanging information related to a rental product between a customer terminal and a server connected through a communication circuit, the program product comprising computer-executable steps of:

15       generating and displaying a screen in which a work content is entered;

          recognizing the work content entered in the screen brought up on display;

20       transmitting the recognized work content to the server;

          receiving information indicating a plurality of types of devices matching the work content and rental information related to the devices, which are searched based upon the transmitted work content; and

generating and displaying a screen displaying the information indicating the devices and the rental information having been received.

5       12. A rental information acquisition server comprising:  
            a database in which information indicating at least a plurality of types of devices and rental information corresponding to the devices are stored in memory in correspondence to a work content;

10           a recognition means for recognizing a work content transmitted from a terminal;

            a search means for searching the database based upon the recognized work content to obtain information indicating a plurality of types of devices and rental information related to the devices in correspondence to the recognized work content; and

            a transmission means for transmitting the information indicating the devices and the rental information thus obtained to the terminal.

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